

Chanute Air Force Base, Hospital
(Building 4)
Senior Officer Row
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1185-C

HABS
ILL
10-RAN.V,
IC-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Chanute Air Force Base, Hospital
(Building 4)

HABS No. IL-1185-C

Location:

Senior Officer Row
Chanute Air Force Base
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS
ILL
10-RAN.V,
IC-

Present Owner:

United States Air Force
OL B, AFBCA
501 East Sopwith, Suite A
Rantoul, Illinois 61866

Present Occupant:

Vacant

Present Use:

Vacant

Significance:

From its establishment in 1917 as a military aviation school, until its closure on September 30, 1993, Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) has served almost continuously as a technical training center for the United States Air Force. As one of the oldest military installations in the Air Force inventory, Chanute AFB has played an important role in the development of the American air defense system. Since its construction, the area of the Historic District has served as Chanute's administrative core, and the design and construction of the buildings and structures within the District reflect the extraordinary growth of the installation just prior to and during the early years of World War II. It was during that period that the base was rapidly transformed from a collection of neglected wooden World War I-era buildings into the permanent brick and steel features that remain as the Chanute AFB Historic District.

Built in 1939-1941, in response to pre-World War II massive mobilization, Building 4 was originally designed as a 75-bed hospital with a 40-man Medical Detachment. Before construction was complete, the building plans were altered to accommodate 110 beds and build additional space for another 500 beds. The building is a significant element of the Chanute AFB Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of erection: 1939-1941.
2. Architect: Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG), Construction Division.
3. Original and subsequent owners: United States Army, United States Air Force.
4. Contractors: Thorp-Rogoff Company, Chicago, Illinois.
5. Original plans and construction: Plans for the building were drawn by the Construction Division of the OQMG.
6. Alterations: The interior of Building 4 has been extensively modified to meet its changing functions. The exterior exhibits modern doors and windows and a permanent iron fire escape has been added. At the time of its construction, the OQMG had standardized plans for hospitals that were based on bed size. This building is from a group of standardized plans based on a 75-bed hospital, but the design was revised before construction was 50 percent complete to meet the rapidly increasing demands of the installation.

B. Historical Context:

Established in 1917, Chanute AFB is one of the oldest Air Force installations in the United States. During World War I, Chanute Field provided pilot training and afterwards temporarily became a storage facility. In 1921, the Air Services Mechanics School was transferred to Chanute from Kelly Field, Texas. When the Wilcox Bill (49 U.S. Stat. 610) was passed by Congress in 1935, the large-scale expansion of Chanute began and, in the next ten years, it changed from a neglected World War I Field into a centralized, subdivision-type collection of brick and steel buildings. More than 200,000 military students would graduate from its various technical schools between 1940 and 1945 and over 1,000,000 students would pass through its doors before its closure in 1993.

In general, the history of Chanute AFB parallels the history of American military aviation and its built environment reflects the economic and military priorities, architectural styles, and concepts of military installation planning common to the OQMG and the Corps of Engineers (COE). The buildings and structures within the Historic District, including this building, reflect Chanute's "Great Renaissance" period (1938-41).

Originally designed for 75 patients and a 40-man Medical Detachment, this building, when it was approximately 50% complete, was redesigned for 115 patients and no Medical Detachment. The contract for the building was awarded to Thorp-Rogoff Construction Company of Chicago, Illinois. The building was equipped with the most modern equipment and the third-floor operating rooms were air conditioned. This hospital was a vast improvement over the former facilities and, by October 1940, 384 people had been admitted to the hospital and operations averaged almost two per day. The Army authorized the construction of another 34-building hospital facility on the base before this building was complete.

During the 1950s, this building became the headquarters for the 3499th Field Training Wing which boasted its own cargo planes and flight operations, and served as control

management for all field training detachments. The building most recently served as an Air Base Group headquarters.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The hospital is symmetrical, brick clad and has classical details that tie it to the nearby Georgian Revival housing.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in fair to good condition with some brick deterioration and evidence of overall deferred maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

Building 4 is an irregularly-shaped, steel-reinforced, brick structure (45,847 square feet) which consists of a three-story with basement, rectangular-in-plan, main section (approximately 50 ft by 100 ft) with two-story, T-shaped wings off the northwest and southeast sides (approximately 30 ft by 75 ft each), and a three-story projecting wing (approximately 50 ft by 90 ft) off the back, connected by a three and one-half story corridor. All are part of the initial construction. The foundation for the building is of large stone blocks that are laid five feet above the ground level with a beveled head.

The exterior walls are autumn-blend colored brick, laid in common bond (five stretcher rows/one header row) with stone mortar. Windows are six-over-six light and eight-over-eight light, double-hung, wooden-framed sash with flat brick heads, metal frames, and stone sills. Those on the first floor of the southeast wing have been replaced with single fixed, smoked-glass lights. Windows on the third floor have stone frames and stone sills that are continuous on the front and back of the main section to form a string course that runs flush with the roof caps of the wings. The basement windows are three-light, wood-framed, hinged and three-over-three light, wood-framed, double-hung sash.

The main section and the back wing of Building 4 have a hipped roof of flat, clay-tile shingles finished with copper gutters, down spouts, a stretcher brick frieze and header brick dentils. The rear slope of the main section has a gabled roof projection with three attic windows while the side wings have a flat, built-up roof hidden behind a brick parapet, topped with a stone cap. The corridors that connect the main section and wings have a pipe rail topping the parapet.

The main, central entrance (southwest side) has a two-story, hood-mold stone frame that surrounds the door and second-story window. The recessed doorway has a segmented arched stone head, metal frame, granite sills, double, modern, single-light doors, and a single-light transom. The stone porch entrance has an alternating diamond and square balustrade that is topped with a molded stone cap and deck. The wide stairway also has a capped stone balustrade and the porch serves as the roof for the arched porte cochere that covers the basement entrance located directly below the main entrance. A curved drive with a stone retaining wall leads to this lower entrance.

The northeast facade of the back wing has open verandas on the second and third floors. with openings that are defined by square brick columns topped by beveled stone caps with decorative iron balustrades. The veranda decks are concrete. The main entrance on the northeast facade has modern, double, metal-framed glass doors with a single-light transom and concrete steps with a metal hand rail. There is a two-story corner porch at

the back of the northwest and southwest wings which have brick square piers, decorative iron balustrades, and concrete steps with a metal hand rail. The northwest end of the rear projection has a flat-roofed, single-story porch with brick piers and solid brick balustrade.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: See the attached floor plans.

2. Summary Description: The first-story front entry has a vestibule with marble wainscoting and a marble floor. The indoor double doors are paired with each door having six lights (three rows of two); the paired doors and five light transoms are within a wood frame.

Some of the building has retained its original features, and some has been remodeled. The original features include terrazzo coves, linoleum floors, plaster walls, chair rail moldings (at four and one-half feet), wooden interior doors with two-light transoms, and metal stairs having metal balustrades with a wood cap. Some original interior doors are four-light, ribbed, glass doors, in single and paired arrangements with a transom above. Other features include acoustical tile ceilings with fluorescent lights and hollow tile interior walls. The southern wing of the building has been completely remodeled with new walls, doors, carpet, lowered ceilings, and other more modern features.

Remnants of the operating rooms remain in the northwest corner of the main section of the third floor and include tiled walls, doctor wash rooms, and the control panel for the HVAC system. Only this section of the building was originally air conditioned.

D. Site:

This building is located within a triangle of streets (South Pacesetter/Senior Officer Row/Jolly Green) at the core of the main administrative area.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings for the buildings on Chanute AFB are currently housed in Building 62, Chanute AFB, Illinois.

B. Historic Views:

A large collection of historic photographs is located in the Museum Building (Hangar 4), Chanute AFB, Illinois.

C. Bibliography:

D. E. McGillem and Associates, Inc., 1990. Historic Inventory Chanute Air Force Base.

King, Thomas F. and Paige M. Peyton, 1991. Chanute AFB, Illinois Historic Evaluation.

U. S. Air Force, 1940. Chanute Field, Office of the Constructing Quartermaster. Chronological Report of Construction Program, December 27, pp. 9-10.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

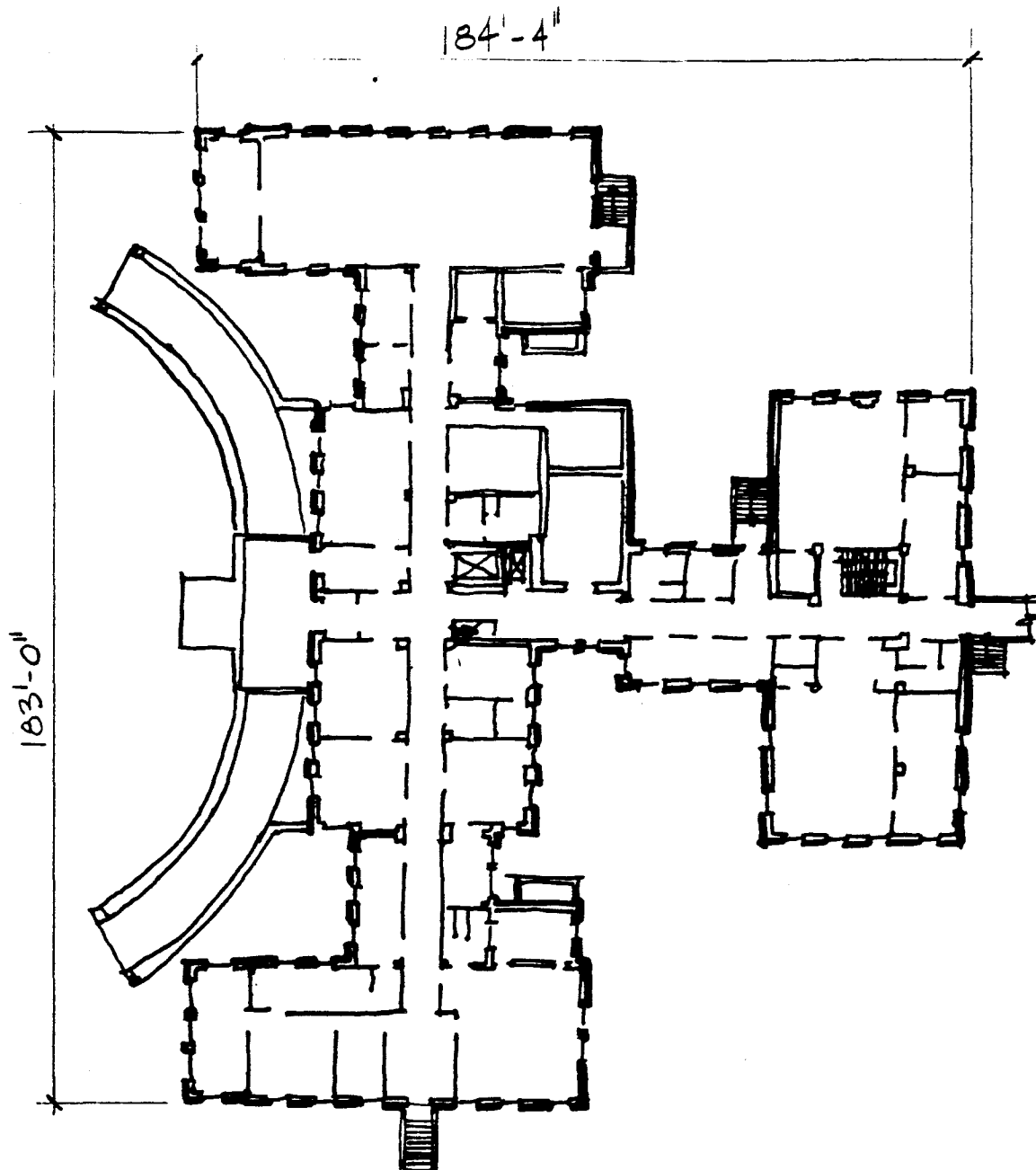
National Register and HABS documentation for the Chanute AFB Illinois Historic District is the culmination of the Section 106 process initiated during the preparation of the Disposal and Reuse Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Chanute AFB. The EIS was precipitated by the Congressional decision to close Chanute AFB as directed by the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) of 1988. A Memorandum of Agreement among the U. S. Air Force, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Eastern Division, has been drafted.

Prepared by: Ana B. Koval, Architectural Historian
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, California 94111

and

Paige M. Peyton, Historian
The Earth Technology Corporation
1461 East Cooley Drive, Suite 100
Colton, California 92324

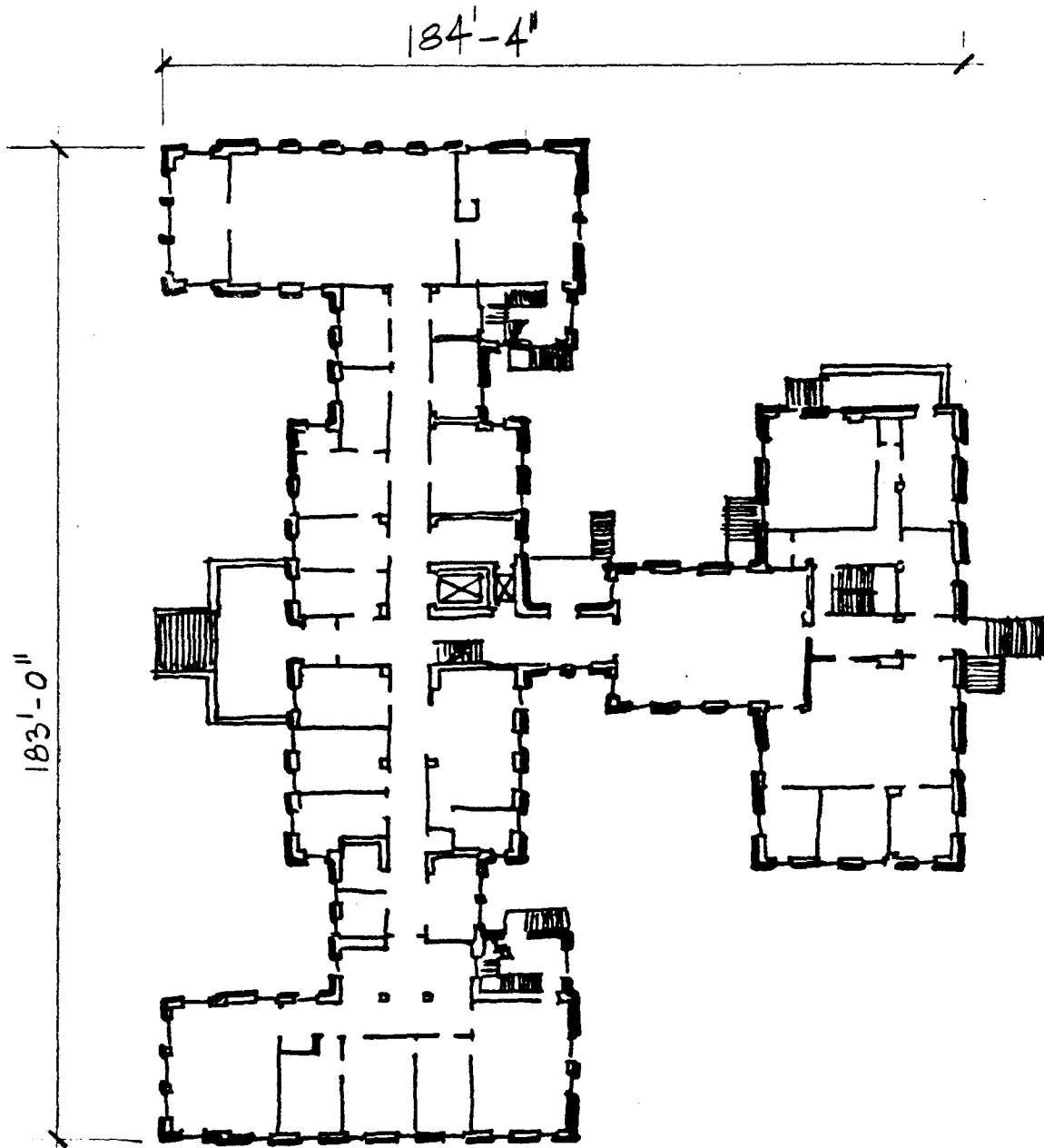
May 1994



NORTH

BASEMENT

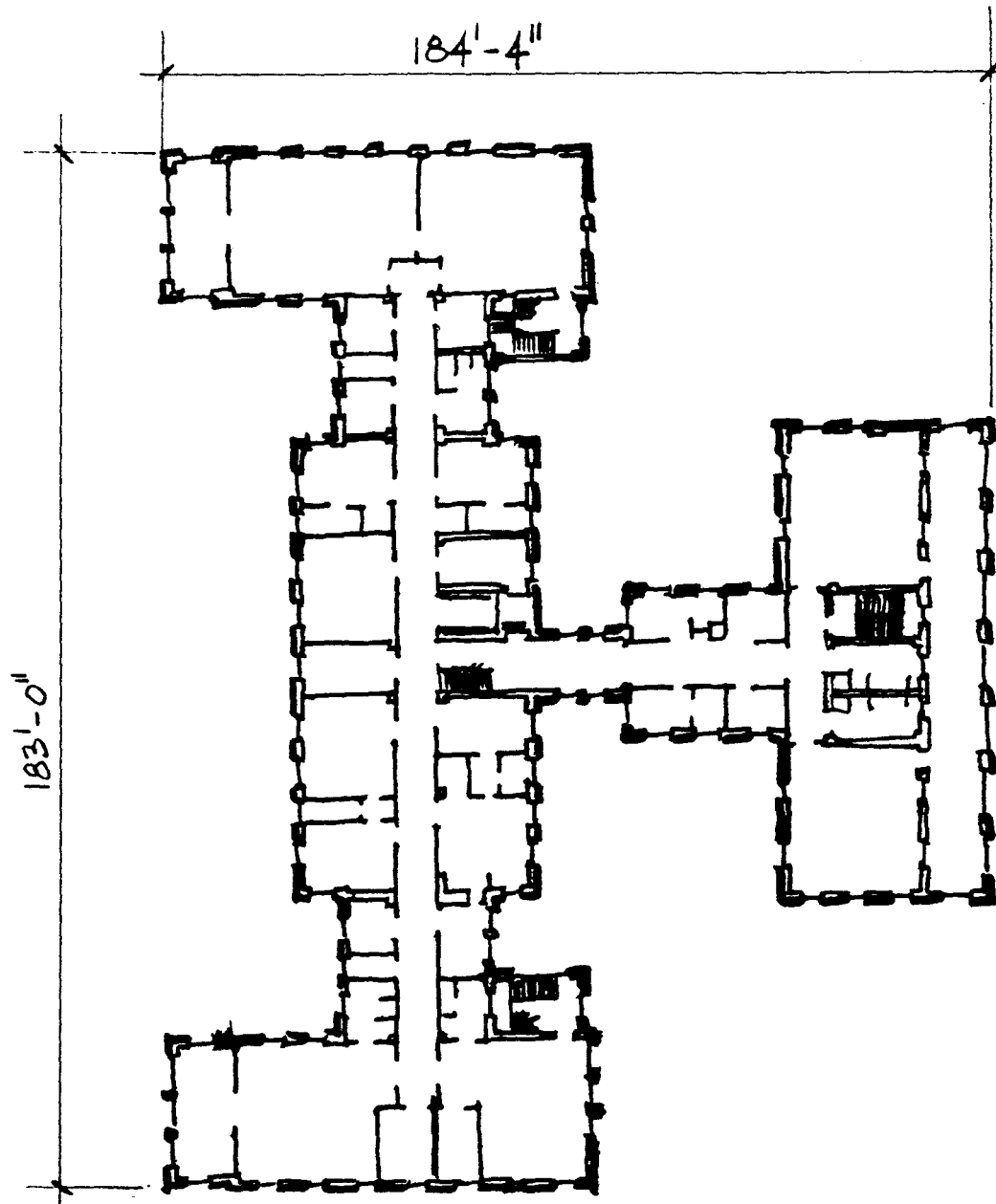
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NORTH

FIRST FLOOR

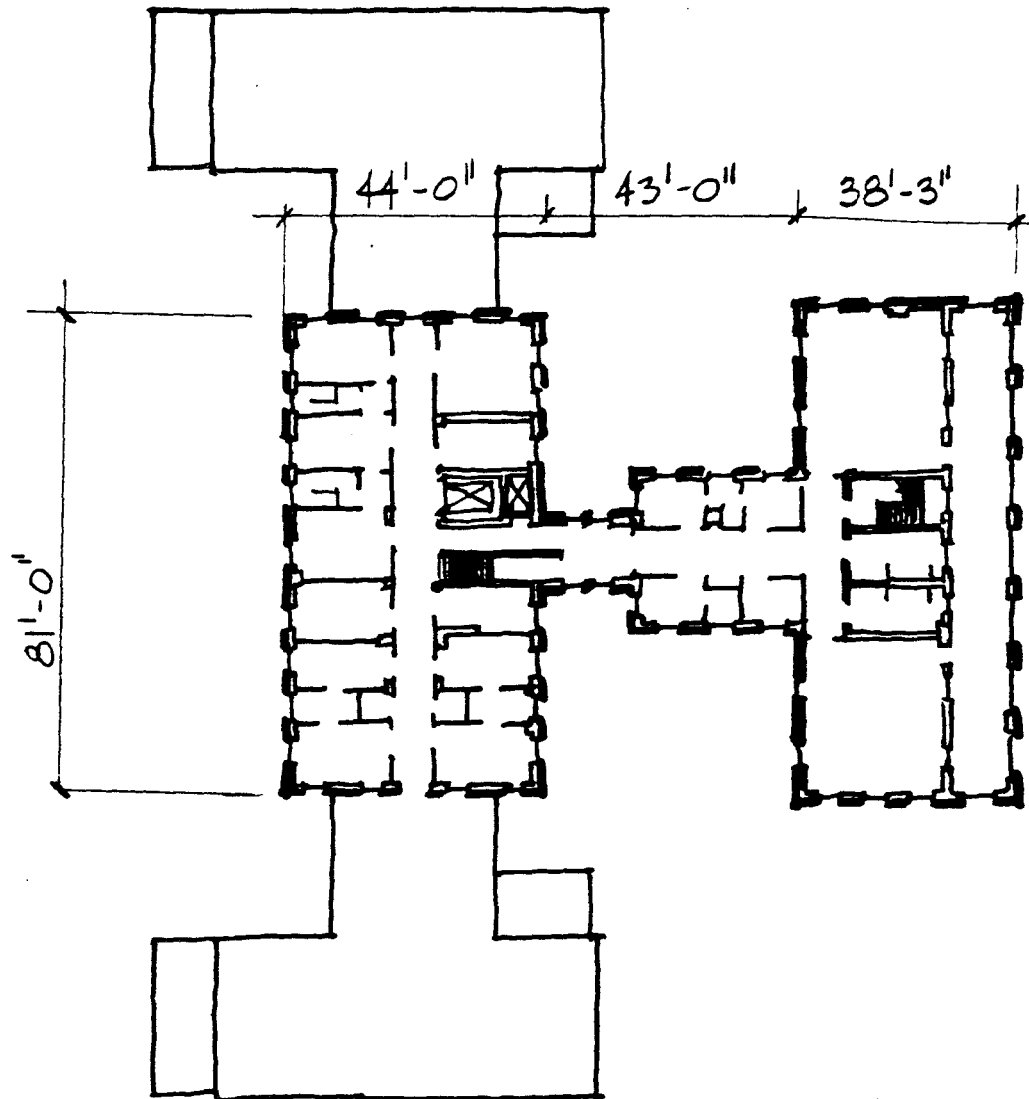
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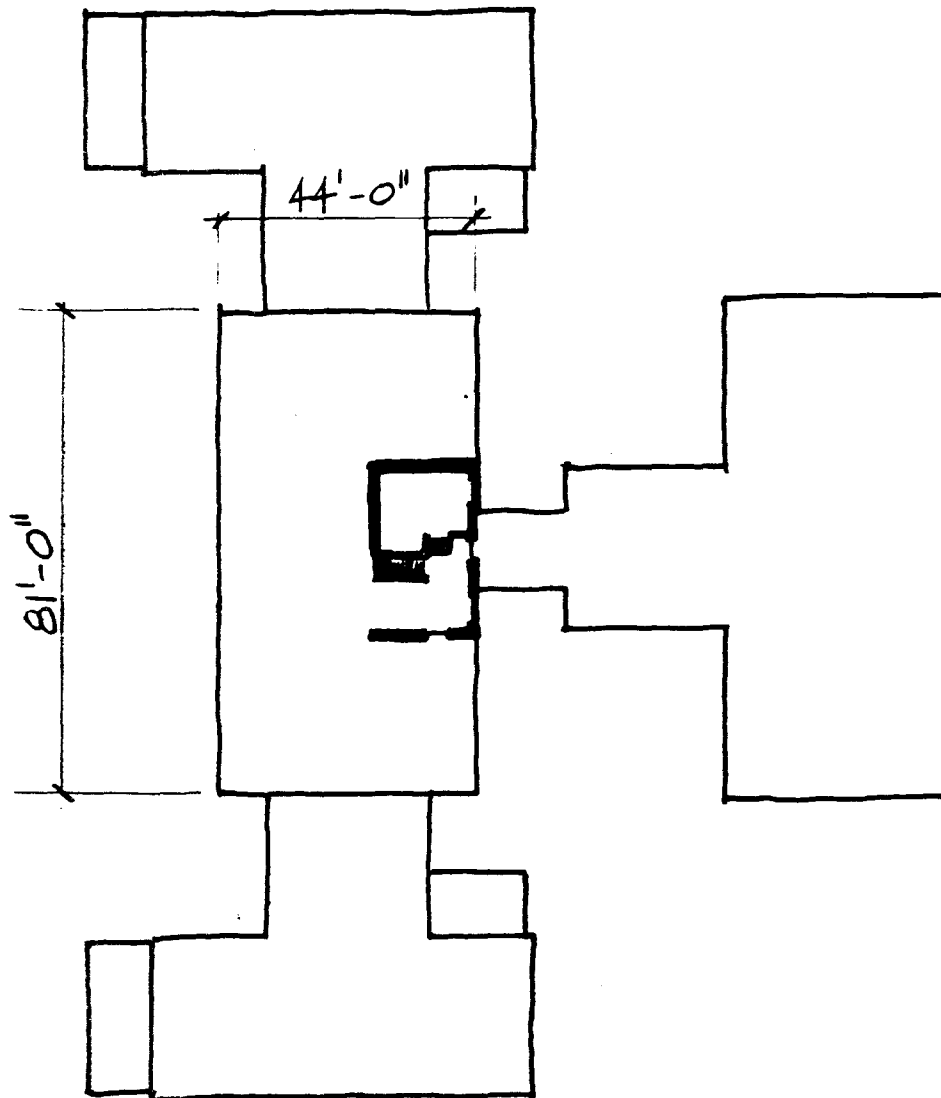
SECOND FLOOR

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NORTH

THIRD FLOOR
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NORTH

PENTHOUSE

DRAWN : 11/12/93